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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

Third meeting of the Co-ordinating Committee
of the Cairo-Gaborone Trans-East African Highway

Addis Ababa, 16-20 December 1980

AFRICAN HIGHWAY MASTER PLAN

I. Introduction

1. The African highway system consists of fragmented national networks with little evidence of any semblance to a co-ordinated continental highway network system.

2. The third meeting of the Conference of Ministers of ECA, held in Nairobi in February 1978, adopted Commission resolution 275 (XII) which requests the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa to prepare a preliminary African Highway Master Plan; and calls on the international community to support such an exercise with technical and financial assistance.

3. ECA's Trans-African Highways Programme, which has identified nine major primary roads and their respective feeder links, has established the basic road transport network; nevertheless a tremendous amount of detailed work remains to be done.

4. As the British/French study of the legal and administrative barriers to travel and trade along the Mombasa-Lagos Trans-African Highway points out, a strategic study of the future transcontinental road system in Africa would:

(a) attempt to predict the growth in transport demand, qualitatively and quantitatively, over the next 20-30 years;

(b) assess the relative economics (taking all considerations into account) of road versus rail and river transport;

(c) make proposals for a basic network of transcontinental routes to be constructed according to a phased investment programme.

5. The study should also enter deeply into the question of criteria suitable for judging the value of investment proposals of this magnitude, involving a number of sovereign States and economic regions.

6. Such a study is considered highly desirable, and would fulfil the basic prerequisite of all other sectoral development efforts, including agriculture, health, education, industry, international trade, mining, and rural development in general. It would exceedingly improve economic co-operation efforts among African countries.

7. An African Highway Master Plan, once realized, would form the basis for planning and development, stage by stage, of inter-country road links of at least all-weather standard, and would promote and enhance the economic integration of the region. The Master Plan should give a precise definition of the current status of the inter-country road links, identify the studies and improvement works required to upgrade substandard segments, compute the technical and financial resources required for the realization of the road links, and determine priorities for a phased investment programme.

8. The African Highway Master Plan should be of immense value to all African Governments, and to co-operating governments of the industrialized countries and financing institutions, who have shown keen interest in the past in the development of Africa in general and its transport system in particular.

II. Master Plan study in outline

9. In broad outline, the study for the establishment a preliminary African Highway Master Plan should:

(a) collect all available data on completed, under construction and planned inter-country road projects and report on their current status;

(b) make an inventory of existing and planned inter-country railways and inland waterways that would influence the proposed inter-country road links and determine whether they are complementary to or competetive with the proposed road links;

(c) identify the routes which should be designated as inter-country road links;

(d) study and make recommendations of design standards for the inter-country road links;

(e) identify the non-physical barriers to international travel and trade along international highways and make recommendations for their facilitation and removal;

(f) recommend a classification system for the African Highway Network;

(g) compute the technical and financial resources required for the realization of the inter-country road links and recommend ways and means to meet these requirements;

(h) identify the various studies (feasibility, detailed engineering, etc.) and improvement works required to bring the inter-country road links to all-weather standard;

(i) recommend a basic network of trans-African primary routes that need to be improved to an all-weather standard according to a phased programme of investment in immediate - medium-and long-term plans.

(j) prepare the necessary maps and diagrams showing current status, planned improvement, traffic flows, etc.

III. Action required

10. International financial institutions and co-operating industrialized countries are invited to sponsor the preparation of the African Highway Master Plan, and come forth with adequate financial and technical assistance required for the successful launching and implementation of this project.

11. Member countries, in recognition of the work already accomplished by ECA in identifying and promoting the Trans-African Highway Network, and in appreciation of the potential of an African Highway Master Plan as an indispensable prerequisite for all sectors of development and the ultimate integration of the region, are required to render their full co-operation to teams of consultants and ECA staff who would eventually call upon them for information and background material needed to prepare the Plan.